ADVENT

XII. No. 3 August 1955

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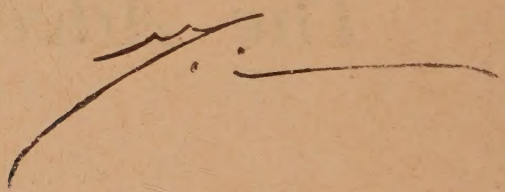
The Advent

Even if you were the only person in the whole world to give himself entirely and in all purity to the Divine,–

And thus being alone, misunderstood naturally by every one upon earth,–

Even if it were so, there is no reason why you should not do it.



The ADVENT

AUGUST 1955

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O Life, thy breath is but a cry to the Light
Immortal, whence has sprung thy swift delight,
Thy grasp.

SRI AUROBINDO

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THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS

TO MELT INTO THE DIVINE

How to melt into the Divine? That is to say, how to get dissolved in the Divine, lose one's ego?

FIRST of all, one must wish for it, will for it, aspire for it with perseverence. Every time the ego shows itself, you must give it a tap on the nose, until it receives so much of it that it gets tired and gives up. Generally, however, one does not administer the tap but cherishes the miscreant, justifies its presence. When it shows itself, one says, "After all it is right"; although in most cases, one does not even know it is the ego, one takes it for one's self. The first condition then is to consider it essential that one should have no more ego. You must understand what is meant when you say you no longer want it. It is not so easy. For while in your brain you turn and turn the idea 'I do not want ego, I do not want to separate from the Divine', in life it has no effect; when actually you do a selfish or egoistic act, you find it quite natural; it does not even give a shock to you.

We must begin by understanding what the thing really means. There are many stages or steps in it. First of all, you must distinguish between two things (1) selfishness and (2) egoism. Selfishness is a crude form and it should not be very difficult to get rid of it, at least a good part of it. You

can get over it simply by having a sense of the ridiculous. You do not se how absurd a selfish man is. He always thinks of himself, bringing every thing round to himself, ruled by considerations of his small person, puttin himself at the centre of the universe and trying to organise the universe including God, around himself, as if he was the most important item c the universe. Now, if you just try to look at yourself from outside in a dis passionate way, see yourself as in a mirror, you immediately recognise ho ridiculous your little person is. I remember I read in French, translated c course, a line from Tagore which amused me very much. It was about little dog. The dog was seated in the lap of its mistress and considere itself to be the centre of the universe. Yes, the picture struck in my minc I knew actually a little dog who was like that. There are many of the kin perhaps all: they want that everybody should be busy with them and the succeed in doing so.

You have to go a long way before you can think of merging your eg your self in the Divine. First of all, you cannot merge your ego or your se until you are a completely individualised being. And do you know wha does that mean—'to be completely individualised'? It means one capable c resisting all external influences. The other day I received a letter fro someone who says that he hesitates to read books; for he has a very stron tendency to identify himself with what he reads, if he reads a novel or drama he becomes the character pictured and is possessed by the feelin and thoughts and movements of the character. There are many like that. they read something, while they read they are completely moved by th ideas and impulsions and even ideals they read about and are totally absorbe in them and become them, without their knowing it even. That is becaus ninety-nine per cent of their nature is made of butter as it were: if you pre your finger it leaves a mark. That is the ordinary man's character. On takes in, as one comes across, a thought experienced by another, a phra read in a book, a thing observed or an incident eyes fall upon, a will or wis of a neighbour, all that enters pell-mell intermixed—enters and goes ou others come in—like electric currents. And one does not notice it. The is a conflict, a clash among these various movements, each trying to get th upper hand. Thus the person is tossed to and fro like a piece of cork up the waves in the sea.

Instead of this unformed and unconscious mass, one has to becom conscious, cohesive, individualised, that which exists by itself and in itsel independently of its surroundings, that which can hear, read, see anythin

and will not change because of that. It receives from outside only what it wishes to receive. It rejects automatically what does not agree with its purpose: nothing can leave any impression upon it, unless it wishes to have the impress. It is thus that one begins to be individualised. And when one is an individual, then only can one make a gift of it, for unless you possess a thing you cannot give it; when you have or are nothing you can give nothing. So in order that the separate ego may disappear, one must be able to give oneself wholly, totally without restrictions. And to be able to give, one must exist and to exist one must be an individual. If your body were not rigid as it is—the body is indeed terribly rigid—if it were not something quite fixed and if you had not this solid skin around the skeleton, if you were the exact expression of what you are vitally and mentally, it would be worse than the gelatinous jelly fish. All would enter and melt into one another, what a chaos and confusion would it be! That is why a rigid form is given at the outset. And you complain: the physical is so fixed, it lacks plasticity, suppleness—it lacks the fluidity that enables one to melt into the Divine! But it was a necessity. For if you were out of your body and entered into the regions behind—the vital,—you would see how things stand there: things get mixed, separated, intertwined, all kinds of vibrations, currents, forces that come and go, struggle and fight, seize each other, absorb each other, repulse each other! Very difficult to find a personality in all that. It is only forces, movements, impulsions, desires. Not that there are not individualities and personalities there too! But they are Powers. They who have individualised themselves in this world are either heroes or demons!

And then in the mind, if you become conscious only of the physical mind, apart from what belongs to the brain, independent of the head, you will see that it is really a market place, as it has been called: everything enters here, all kinds of ideas and notions cross and recross and move about, jostle one another, knock against each other—there are even accidents sometimes. There you can search, but search in vain to find where your own mind lies.

One needs years of labour—organising, selecting, building up very diligently, very carefully, very rationally, very cohesively, in order simply to form oneself: to form, this simple thing, for example, to think in one's own way. You believe you think in your own way, you do not know how much you depend for your thoughts upon the people you speak to, upon the books that you read, upon your varying moods; yes, it depends not unoften upon your good or bad digestion, upon the fact of your being closed in a room

or free in the open air, upon the scenery around you, upon sun or shower. You do not notice it, but you think of different things in different ways according to conditions or situations which have nothing to do with your own self. So, I say, to have your thoughts coordinated, cohesive, logical, you would need a long, very long work in minute details. And then, that is the most important part of the thing, when you have come to a beautiful mental structure, well-shaped, very strong, very powerful, the first thing you will be told to do is that you must break it up, if you wish to be united with the Divine! And unless and until you have done the first part you cannot do the second part, unless you form yourself you cannot give yourself, you would have nothing to give to the Divine. You are nothing more than a mass of inchoate things which are not yourself. First you must exist, you must be, before you can give yourself.

At the present moment in the actual state of things what one can give to the Divine is one's body. But that is precisely the thing that one does not give. Yes, try to consecrate your work, your bodily labour; even there, there are so many things that are not true or correct.

You may naturally ask how to melt the body in the Divine? You say you understand somewhat melting the mind, melting the vital, thoughts and emotions, ideas and aspirations into the Divine, but the body? It cannot be melted as in a cauldron! And yet that is the only thing upon which you can put your personal name—although that too is only a convention—and say this is I. Of course if you look at yourself in a mirror, you see clearly you are not what you were twenty years ago, you are now quite different, quite unrecognisable. Still you have the perception that it is the same person, yourself. You can begin your giving by that which is most formed, most known to you as yourself.

I do not mean to confront you with complicated movements. What I say is this that if you speak of melting into the Divine or uniting with the Divine, you must first of all know what you are. You are apparently the ego. It is there. The ego is meant to make you conscious, an independent, individualised being—that is to say, you must not be a market place where all kinds of movements mix and jostle; you must be able to exist in yourself. The ego is for that and that is why you have a skin, to form a closed circle (allowing, of course, things to infiltrate through its pores, so to say, but it must be at your will and bid).

You must form yourself, you must be conscious of yourself—not in a general way but in every detail. Every detail of what you call yourself

must be organised around one centre, your true self, the divine being in you, so that the whole may be a cohesive organised entity. When thus wholly conscious, harmoniously organised around the divine centre, then it can be wholly consecrated, united to the Divine: then the time comes, the Divine permits the true union to be made. When the individualisation is complete then He lets you merge your ego into the Divine, you live and exist for the Divine alone.

28-8-1954

REGARDING THE BODY

The fatigue of the body comes from an inner disharmony. There may be many other apparent reasons, but all amount to that fundamental circumstance viz. a want of balance among the different parts of the being. That may occur on a day when, for example, you had a lot of energy and you spent too much. But such is usually not the case with children. They spend and continue to spend till they are not able to. A child is very active till the last moment when it drops dead asleep. A minute before it was moving about, running, shouting, all on a sudden it falls down into deep sleep. And that is how they grow and gain strength. So the trouble does not lie in spending. Spending is easily repaired by necessary rest. Fatigue and lethargy too come from a different source.

People think they have only to continue to do what they do every day, perform the same work, with the same state of consciousness regularly and everything will be all right. But things do not happen that way. All on a sudden in the midst of the regular movement, you do not know why or how, a part of your being—some feeling, or thought—makes a progress, discovers a new thing, receives a light or a higher impulsion. That part shoots out, as it were, and goes forward: the other parts remain behind That brings about a disharmony and it is quite sufficient to cause fatigue, even much fatigue. Truly, however, this is not fatigue, but a desire to keep quiet, to concentrate, to remain within oneself and build a new harmony between the disparate parts. And such a state or period is quite necessary which is a period of assimilation of what one has learnt, of harmonisation of all the limbs.

With regard to their physical being, men live in a formidable ignorance. How many of you know the exact quantity of food and the kind of food the body requires? Yes, simply this, how much to take and when to take? You do not know. You are taught all kinds of things. You learn why and how

this earth moves or the sun does not, why or how the triangle consists of two right angles: your faculties of imagination and discrimination are set to the task and get sharpened. But this little bit of exact knowledge you do not have—the quantity of food you must take and the hour when the body needs it. It may be you are not unaware at times of this exact need. But to know properly demands a discipline, continuous labour for years perhaps. Years indeed you require when it is a matter of control over your mind, of attaining a consciousness subtle enough to enable you to come in contact with the elements of transformation and progress, to know how to dose for your body the exact amount of physical effort, material activity, expenditure and reception of energy, how to secure the proportion between what is received and what is given out, how to utilise energy to reestablish equilibrium that was broken in order to push forward new cells that were lagging behind and then how to build up conditions for a further step in upward progress to be possible etc., etc. The task is formidable. And yet that is the thing to be done if you want the body to be transformed. First of all, you must bring the body into complete harmony with the inner consciousness. That means a work in each cell of the body, in each small activity, in each movement of the organs. Only that and nothing more can keep you busy day and night with no other thing to look to. It is not easy to maintain the effort, the concentration, the inner vision in a continued manner.

You have to enter into the disposition of the cells, your inner physical organisation if the body is to answer to the force that descends. First of all, you must be conscious of your physical cells, you must know their different functions, the degree of receptivity in each, which of them are in good condition and which are not. Even the simple thing you do not know whether you are tired or not, not to speak of why you are tired. You do not know if you have a pain somewhere, and why it is there. It is exactly for this reason that you run to the doctor. For you have the illusion that the doctor would know better to look into what is there inside your body and what is happening there. That does not seem to be quite rational, but there is the habit. Who can look into oneself so precisely, accurately, positively as to know exactly what is out of order, why it is out of order, how it has come to be so? all that is a matter of pure observation. And then only arises the problem of doing the thing that will bring about a new order which is a much more difficult business. And yet this is only the a, b, c of body-transformation.

24-2-1954 NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

I

The Witness Attitude and Surrender

THE attitude of the witness consciousness within—I do not think it necessarily involves an external seclusion, though one may do that also—is a very necessary stage in the progress. It helps the liberation from the lower prakriti—not getting involved in the ordinary nature movements; it helps the establishment of a perfect calm and peace within, for there is then one part of the being which remains detached and sees without being disturbed the perturbations of the surface; it helps also the ascent into the higher consciousness and the descent of the higher consciousness, for it is through this calm, and detached and liberated inner being that the ascent and descent can easily be done. Also, to have the same witness look on the movements of Prakriti in others, seeing, understanding, but not perturbed by them in any way is a very great help towards both the liberation and universalisation of the being. I could not therefore possibly object to this movement in a sadhak.

As for the surrender it is not inconsistent with the witness attitude. On the contrary by liberating from the ordinary Prakriti, it makes easier the surrender to the higher or divine Power. Very often when this witness attitude has not been taken but there is a successful allowing in of the Force to act in one, one of the first things the Force does is to establish the witness attitude so as to be able to act with less interference or immixture from the movements of the lower Prakriti. There remains the question of the avoidance of contact with others and there there is some difficulty or incertitude. Part of your nature has a strong turn towards contact with others, action on others, interchange, almost a need of it. This brings about some fluctuation between the turn to an inner seclusion and the turn towards contact and action. There is the same double and fluctuating movement in others here like X. In such cases I generally do not stress upon either tendency but

leave the consciousness to find its own poise, because I have seen that to press too much on the isolation tendency when the nature is not mainly contemplative does not succeed very well—unless of course the sadhak himself gets a strong and fixed determination that way. This may be the cause of what you felt. But the question between the witness attitude and surrender does not arise, for the reason I have explained—one can very well be and is tuned to the other as ours is a Yoga which joins these things together and does not keep them always separate.

16-9-1934

II

EMPTINESS

The emptiness that you described in your letter yesterday was not a bad thing — it is this emptiness inward and outward that often in Yoga becomes the first step towards a new consciousness. Man's nature is like a cup of dirty water—the water has to be thrown out, the cup left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it. The difficulty is that the human physical consciousness feels it difficult to bear this emptiness—it is accustomed to be occupied by all sorts of little mental and vital movements which keep it interested and amused or even if in trouble and sorrow still active. The cessation of these things is hard to bear for it. It begins to feel dull and restless and eager for the old interests and movements. But by this restlessness it disturbs the quietude and brings back the things that had been thrown out. It is this that is creating the difficulty and the obstruction for the moment. If you can accept emptiness as a passage to the true consciousness and true movements, then it will be easier to get rid of the obstacle.

All in the Ashram are not suffering from the sense of dullness and want of interest, but many are because the Force that is descending is discouraging the old movements of the physical and vital mind which they call life and they are not accustomed to accept the renunciation of these things or to admit the peace or joy of silence.

9-9-1936

III

PEACE AND HAPPINESS

The ease and peace are felt very deep and far within because they are in the psychic and the psychic is very deep within us, covered over by the mind and vital. When you meditate you open to the psychic, become aware of your psychic consciousness deep within and feel these things. In order that these ease and peace and happiness may become strong and stable and felt in all the being and in the body, you have to go still deeper within and bring out the full force of the psychic into the physical. This can most easily be done by regular concentration and meditation with the aspiration for this true consciousness. It can be done by work also, by dedication, by doing the work for the Divine only without thought of self and keeping the idea of consecration to the Mother always in the heart. But this is not easy to do perfectly.

5-9-1936

IV

LIGHTNESS

The lightness, the feeling of the disappearance of the head and that all is open is a sign of the wideness of the mental consciousness which is no longer limited by the brain and its body sense—no longer imprisoned but wide and free. This is felt in the meditation only at first or with closed eyes, but at a later stage it becomes established and one feels always oneself a wide consciousness not limited by any feeling of the body. You felt something of this wideness of your being in the second experience when the Mother's foot pressed down your physical mind (head) till it went below and left room for this sense of an infinite Self. This wide consciousness not dependent on the body or limited by it is what is called in Yoga the Atman or Self. You are only having the first glimpses of it, but later on it becomes normal and one feels that one was always this Atman infinite and immortal.

I don't think the lack of sleep when it comes is due to want of work; for even those who do no work at all get good sleep. It is something else; but it must be got over.

The constant remembrance of the Mother is a difficult thing and few have it, but it will come in time. Meanwhile her Force is working in you and preparing your consciousness for that.

20-10-1936.

V

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE UNIVERSAL

(1)

Q. (*a*) *You have said in a letter that we do not create our thoughts and that they come into our mind from outside. Does this mean that the thoughts eternally exist in the general Nature even before the human beings came on earth.*

(*b*) *If they are not created by men does it mean that they were created and set into activity by some beings of the mental plane?*

(*c*) *If a man's thoughts are not his own creation but only universal thought waves passing through his mind, how can he have any responsibility for his good or bad thoughts? Would not the same be true of his emotions, sensations and other movements?*

A: (a) No—they are formations of Prakriti, temporary not eternal.

(b) All these things are formations of the universal Prakriti—mental beings may be channels or help to give them form, but do not originate them. The human being receives these waves of Prakriti and they enter into him as ideas or take the form of ideas, but he is an instrument and not a creator.

(c) That does not follow, because the human being is the Purusha who has the power of sanction or rejection. The human being receives but he is not bound to receive, he can reject, and in so far as he has that capacity he has the responsibility of the thoughts, feelings, emotions of which he is the instrument.

7-12-1936.

(2)

Q: (*a*) *The mind, life and body of each being are said to be a portion of the universal mind, life and matter. Are they really a portion or a wave of the latter?*

(*b*) *When one tries to transform one's mind, life and body is there not a percussion or resistance in the universal?*

(*c*) *If we consider the individual mind, life and body to be only a wave of the universal, then since a transformed individual would be only one wave in the midst of many others, would it not be dissolved and mixed up with the other ordinary waves?*

A: (a) These are metaphors intended to indicate not to describe exactly the nature of the relation.

(b) Naturally. To transform one's own one has to throw back the old movements into the universal which tries to reimpose them.

(c) That might apply to a sending out of the new waves upon the old sea, i.e. an attempt to transform the world. But the problem here is of self-transformation. Mixture comes by the old waves pressing in again; one has to prevent or get rid of the mixture. But the decisive movement is the descent of the things from above—when that becomes complete, then the being depends on the Above not on the Around. If the waves from the Around try to get in, it is they who are transformed(or rejected automatically), the roles are reversed.

19-3-1936

SRI AUROBINDO

MAHABHARATA

(A Translation)

(Continued from last issue)

THE BOOK OF THE ASSEMBLY HALL*

The Debated Sacrifice

ON Krishna as on sage and guide his mind
(Who is indeed the guide of all mankind)
He fixed and sent his messenger afar
To Yadove land in a swift-rolling car.
Then sped the rushing wheels with small delay
And reached the gated city Dwaraca,
The gated city where Janardan dwelt.
Krishna to Yudhishthere's desire felt
Answering desire and went with Indrosane
Passing through many lands to Indra-Plain,
Fierily passing with impetuous hooves
To Indraprastha and the men he loves.
With filial soul his brothers Yudhishthere
And Bheme received the man without compeer:
But Krishna to his father's sister went
And greeted her with joyous love; then bent
His heart to pleasure with his heart's own friend,
While reverently the courteous twins attend.
But after rest in those bright halls renowned
Yudhishthere sought the immortal man and found
At leisure sitting and revealed his need.
"King's Sacrifice I covet, but indeed
Thou knowest not practicable by will alone
Like other rites is this imperial one,
But he in whom all kingly things combine,

* *Sabhāparva*

He whom all men, all lands to honour join,
A King above all kings, he finds alone
Empire. And now though all my friends are one
And bid me forward, I yet attend
From thy voice only certainty, O friend.
Some from affection lovingly suppress
Their friend's worst fault and some from selfishness,
Speaking what most will please. Others conceal
Their own good with the name of commonweal.
Such counsel in his need a monarch hath.
But thou art pure of selfish purpose; wrath
And passion know thee not; and thou wilt tell
What shall be solely and supremely well".

Krishna made answer: "all thy virtues, all
Thy gifts make thee the man imperial.
Thou dost deserve this sacrifice. Yet well
Though thou mayst know it, one thing will I tell.
When Rama, Jamadagni's son, had slain
The chivalry of earth, those who were fain
To flee, left later issue to inherit
The name of Kshattriya and the regal spirit.
Of these the rule by compact of the clan
Approved thou knowest, and each highborn man
Whate'er and all the kingly multitude
Name themselves subjects of great Ila's brood
And the Ikshwaku house. Now by increase
The Ikshwaku Kings and Ilian count no less
Than are a hundred clans. Of all most huge
Yayaty of the Bhojas, a deluge
Upon the earth in multitude and gift.
To these all chivalry their eyes uplift,
These and their mighty fortunes serve. But now
King Jarasandha lifts his diademed brow
And Ila and Ikshwaku pale their fires,
O'erwhelmed. He over kings and nations towers;
This way and that way with impetuous hands
Assailing overbears; the middle lands
Inhabits and by division rules the world,

Since he in whose sole hand the earth is furled,
Who is first monarch and supreme may claim,
He and he only, the imperial name.
And him the mighty hero, Shishupal
Owns singly nor disdains his lord to call,
But leads his warfare, and, of captains best,
The puissant man and subtle strategist,
Chuccar, the Koruush king, and those two famed
Grew to his side, Hunsa and Dimbhuc named,
Brave men and high of heart, and Corrusus,
Duntvaccar, Maghavahan, Corovus,
Great kings; and the wide-ruler of the West
The Yavan lord upon whose gleaming crest
Burns the strange jewel wonderful, whose might
Is like the boundless oceans infinite,
Whose rule Norac obeys and Muruland.
King Bhagdutt owns Jarasandh's command,
Thy father's ancient friend, and more in gest with hand
Serves him than word. He only of the West
And southern end of earth who is possessed,
The hero Kuntivardhan Purujit
Feels for thee as a tender father might.
Chained by affection to thee is his heart
And by affection in thy weal has part.
To Jarasandh he whom I did not slay
Is gathered, he who must forsooth display
My signs, gives himself out god humanised
And man ideal, and for such is prized
Now in the world, a madman soiled of soul,
The tyrant of the Chedies, whose control
Poundra and Keerat own, a mighty lord,
King of Bengal and by the name adored
Of Poundrian Vasudave. The Bhoja strong
To whom wide lands, one fourth of all, belong,
Called friend of Indra—he made tameable
Pandya and Cruth and Koyshic by his skill
And science, and his brother Aacity
Is very Parashuram in prowess—he,

Even Bheeshmuc, even this high, far-conquering king
To Jarasandh is vowed. We worshipping,
We who implore his favour, we his kin
Are utterly rejected, all our pain
Of benefaction met with sharp contempt,
Benefit with harm returned or evil attempt.
He has forgot his birth, his pride, his name;
Blinded by Jarasandh's burning fame
To him is gone. To him high fortune yields;
Great nations leave their old ancestral fields.
The Bhojas of the North to western plain
Their eighteen clans transplanted, Surasegn,
Shalwa, Petucchur, Kuuntie, Bhudrocar,
Susthall, Kulind, Sucuitta. All that are
Of the Shalwaian kings brother of friend,
Are with their leaders gone, nor yet an end;
The Southern Panchals and in Kuntie-land
The Eastern Coshalas. Their native north
Abandoning the Matsyas have gone forth
And from their fear take southern sanctuary:
With them the clan Sannyastapad. Lastly
The warrior great Panchalas terrified
Have left their kingdoms and to every side
Are scattering before Jarasandh's name.
On us the universal tempest came,
When Kansa furiously crushed of old
The Yadavas; for to Kansa bad and bold
The son of Brihadrath his daughter gave
Born younger feminine to male Sahadave,
Ustie and Praptie. In this tie made strong
His royal kin he overpowered; nor long,
Being supreme, ruled prudently, but grew
A tyrant and a fool. Whereupon drew
The Bhoja lords together, those whom tired
His cruelties, and these with me conspired
Seeking a national deliverer.
Therefore I rose and Ahuik's daughter, her
The sweet and slender, gave to Ocrur,—then

Made free from tyranny my countrymen.
With me was Raam, the plougher of the foe;
Our swords laid Kansa and Sandaman low.
Scarce was this inbred peril crossed and we
Safe, Jarasandh arose. Then laid their plans
By vast majority the eighteen clans,
That though we fought for ever, though we slew
With mighty blows infallible, o'erthrew
Foe upon foe, three centuries might take wing
Nor yet be slain the armies of the King.
For him and his two men like gods made strong,
Unslayable where the weapons thickest throng,
Hamsa and Dimbhuc styled. Those two uniting,
Heroes, and Jarasandh heroic fighting
Might battle with assembled worlds and win;
Such was my thought, nor mine alone has been,
But all the kings this counsel entertain,
O wisest Yudhishthere. Now there was slain
By Raam in eight days' battle duelling
One Hansa truly named, a mighty king.
"Hansa is slain" said one to Dimbhuc. Him
Hearing the Jumna's waters overwhelm
Devoted. Without Hansa here alone
He had not heart to linger, so is gone
His way to death. Of Dimbhuc's death when knew
Hansa, sacker of cities, he too drew
To the same waves that closed above his friend.
There were they joined in one o'erwhelming end.
This hearing Jarasandha discontent
With empty heart to his own city went.
The King being gone we in all joy again
In Mathura dwelt and our ancestral plain.
But she, the royal princess lotus-eyed,
Went to her father mourning; she, the pride
Of Jarasandha and Kansa's wife, and cried,
Spurning the mighty Maagadh, weeping: "Kill
My husband's murderer, O my father", and still,
"Kill him!" But we minding the old thought planned

With heavy hearts out from our native land.
Son, friend and kinsman, all in fear must flee
Our endless riches' loose prolixity
Unportable by division we compressed
And with it fared sadly into the West.
The lovely city, fair Kushasthaly,
With mountains beautiful, our colony
We made, the Ryevut mountains; and up-piled
Ramparts which even the gods in battle wild
Could hardly scale, ramparts which women weak
Might hold—of Vrishny's swords what need to speak.
Five are the leagues our dwelling place extends,
Three are the mountain-shoulders and each ends
An equal space: hundred-gated the town:
Each gate with heroism and renown
Is bolted and has eighteen keys close-bound,
Eighteen strong bows in whom the trumpets sound
Wakes headlong lust of war. Thousands as many
Our race. Ahuk has hundred sons nor any
Less than a god, And Charudeshna, he
With his dear brother, hero Satyaki,
Chacrodave, I, the son of Rohinie,
And Samba and Pradyumna, seven are we,
Seven strong men; nor other seven more weak,
Cunca, Shuncou, Kountie and Someque,
Anadhrishty, Somitinjoy, Critovurm:
Undhuk's two sons besides and the old King; firm
As adamant they, heroes energical.
These are the Vrishny men who lead there, all
Remembering the sweet middle lands we lost.
There we behold that flood of danger crossed
The Maagudh, Jarasandh, the mountain jaws
Impassable behold. There free from cause
Of fear, eastern or northern, Modhou's sons
Dwell glad of safety. Lo, we the mighty ones,
Because King Kansa married, to the West,
By Jarasandha utterly distressed,
Are fled, and there on Ryevut, hill of kine,

Find sanctuary from danger Magadhine.
Therefore though thou art with imperialness
Endiademed already, though the race
Of high-born princes thou must weld in one
And be their King and Emperor alone,
Yet not while Jarasandha liveth dream
That thou canst wear thy destined diadem.
Great Jarasandha living, for he brings
The princes of the earth and all her kings
And Girivraj with mighty prisoners fills
And in a cavern of the lordly hills,
A lion's homestead, slaughtered elephants lie:
So they a hecatomb of royalty
Wait their dire ending; for Magadha's King
A sacrifice of princes purposing,
With fierce asceticism of will adored
Mahadeva mighty-minded, Uma's lord.
Conquering he moves towards his purpose, brings
Army on army, kings on battling kings,
Victorious brings and binds and makes of men
His mountain town a huge cattle-pen.
Us too his puissance drove in strange dismay
To the fair-gated city, Dwaraca.
If thou dost to the Sacrifice aspire,
Imperial this road is to thy desire
Therefore if of Imperial Sacrifice
Thou art ambitious, first, O Prince, devise
To rescue all those murdered kings and slay
King Jarasandha, since thus only may
The instituted Sacrifice attain
Its great proportion and immenser plan.
King, I have said; yet as thy deeper mind
Adviseth thee. Only when all's designed,
All reasons wished, then give me word."

SRI AUROBINDO

(*to continue*)

SOCIAL REFORM*

REFORM is not an excellent thing in itself as many Europeanised intellects imagine; neither is it always safe and good to stand unmoved in the ancient paths as the orthodox obstinately believe. Reform is sometimes the first step to the abyss, but immobility is the most perfect way to stagnate and to putrefy. Neither is moderation always the wisest counsel: the mean is not always golden. It is often an euphemism for purblindness, for a tepid indifference or for a cowardly inefficiency. Men call themselves moderates, conservatives or extremists and manage their conduct and opinions in accordance with a formula. We like to think by systems and parties and forget that truth is the only standard. Systems are merely convenient cases for keeping arranged knowledge, parties a useful machinery for combined action, but we make of them an excuse for avoiding the trouble of thought.

One is astonished at the position of the orthodox. They labour to deify everything that exists. Hindu society has certain arrangements and habits which are merely customary. There is no proof that they existed in ancient times nor any reason why they should last into the future. It has other arrangements and habits for which textual authority can be quoted, but it is oftener the text of the modern Smritikaras than of Parasara and Manu. Our authority for them goes back to the last five hundred years. I do not understand the logic which argues that because a thing has lasted for five hundred years it must be perpetuated through the aeons. Neither antiquity nor modernity can be the test of truth or the test of usefulness. All the Rishis do not belong to the past; the Avatars still come; revelation still continues.

Some claim that we must at any rate adhere to Manu and the Puranas, whether because they are sacred or because they are national. Well but, if they are sacred, you must keep to the whole and not cherish isolated texts

* Old Writing

while disregarding the body of your authority. You cannot pick and choose; you cannot say "This is sacred and I will keep to it, that is less sacred and I will leave it alone." When you so treat your sacred authority, you are proving that to you it has no sacredness. You are juggling with truth; for you are pretending to consult Manu when you are really consulting your own opinions, preferences or interests. To recreate Manu entire in modern society is to ask Ganges to flow back to the Himalayas. Manu is no doubt national, but so is the animal sacrifice and the burnt offering. Because a thing is national of the past, it need not follow that it must be national of the future. It is stupid not to recognise altered conditions.

We have similar apologies for the unintelligent preservation of mere customs; but, various as are the lines of defence, I do not know any that is imperiously conclusive. Custom is *śiṣṭācāra*, decorum, that which all well-bred and respectable people observe. But so were the customs of the far past that have been discontinued and, if now revived, would be severely discountenanced and, in many cases, penalised; so too are the customs of the future that are now being resisted or discouraged,—even, I am prepared to believe, the future no less than the past prepares for us new modes of living which in the present would not escape the censure of the law. It is the *ācāra* that makes the *śiṣta*, not the *śiṣta* who makes the *ācāra*. The *ācāra* is made by the rebel, the innovator, the man who is regarded in his own time as eccentric, disreputable or immoral, as was Sri Krishna by Bhurisrava because he upset the old ways and the old standards. Custom may be better defended as ancestral and therefore cherishable. But if our ancestors had persistently held that view, our so cherished customs would never have come into being. Or, more rationally, custom must be preserved because its long utility in the past argues a sovereign virtue for the preservation of society. But to all things there is a date and a limit. All long continued customs have been sovereignly useful in their time, even totemism and polyandry. We must not ignore the usefulness of the past, but we seek in preference a present and a future utility.

Custom and Law may then be altered. For each age its shastra. But we cannot argue straight off that it must be altered, or even if alteration is necessary, that it must be altered in a given direction. One is repelled by the ignorant enthusiasm of social reformers. Their minds are usually a strange jumble of ill-digested European notions. Very few of them know anything about Europe, and even those who have visited it know it badly. But they will not allow things or ideas contrary to European notions to be

anything but superstitious, barbarous, harmful and benighted, they will not suffer what is praised and practised in Europe to be anything but rational and enlightened. They are more appreciative than Occidentals themselves of the strength, knowledge and enjoyment of Europe; they are blinder than the blindest and most self-sufficient Anglo-Saxon to its weakness, ignorance and misery. They are charmed by the fair front Europe presents to herself and the world; they are unwilling to discern any disease in the entrails, any foulness in the rear. For the Europeans are as careful to conceal their social as their physical bodies and shrink with more horror from nakedness and indecorum than from the reality of evil. If they see the latter in themselves, they avert their eyes, crying, "It is nothing or it is little; we are healthy, we are perfect, we are immortal." But the face and hands cannot always be covered, and we see blotches.

The social reformer repeats certain stock arguments like shibboleths. For these antiquities he is a fanatic or a crusader. Usually he does not act up to his ideas, but in all sincerity he loves them and fights for them. He pursues his nostrums as panaceas; it would be infidelity to question or examine their efficacy. His European doctors have told him that early marriage injures the physique of a nation, and that to him is the gospel. It is not convenient to remember that physical deterioration is a modern phenomenon in India and that our grandparents were strong, vigorous and beautiful. He hastens to abolish the already disappearing nautchgirl, but it does not seem to concern him that the prostitute multiplies. Possibly some may think it a gain that the European form of the malady is replacing the Indian! He tends towards shattering our cooperative system of society and does not see that Europe is striding Titanically towards Socialism.

Orthodox and reformer alike lose themselves in details; but it is principles that determine details. Almost every point that the social reformers raise could be settled one way or the other without effecting the permanent good of society. It is pitiful to see men labouring the point of marriage between subcastes and triumphing over an isolated instance. Whether the spirit as well as the body of caste should remain, is the modern question. Let Hindus remember that caste as it stands is merely *jāt*, the trade guild sanctified but no longer working, it is not the eternal religion, it is not Chaturvarnya. I do not care whether widows marry or remain single; but it is of infinite importance to consider how women shall be legally and socially related to man, as his inferior, equal or superior; for even the relation of superiority is no more impossible in the future than it was in the far-distant past. And

the most important question of all is whether society shall be competitive or cooperative, individualistic or communistic. That we should talk so little about these things and be stormy over insignificant details, shows painfully the impoverishment of the average Indian intellect. If these greater things are decided, as they must be, the smaller will arrange themselves.

There are standards that are universal and there are standards that are particular. At the present moment all societies are in need of reform, the Parsi, Mahomedan and Christian not a whit less than the Hindu which alone seems to feel the need of radical reformation. In the changes of the future the Hindu society must take the lead towards the establishment of a new universal standard. Yet being Hindus we must seek it through that which is particular to ourselves. We have one standard that is at once universal and particular, the eternal religion, which is the basis, permanent and always inherent in India, of the shifting, mutable and multiform thing we call Hinduism. Sticking fast where you are like a limpet is not the dharma, neither is leaping without looking the dharma. The eternal religion is to realise God in our inner life and our outer existence, in society not less than in the individual. *Eṣa dharmaḥ sanātanaḥ*. God is not antiquity nor novelty: He is not the Manava Dharmashastra, nor Vidyaranya, nor Raghunandan; neither is He an European. God who is essentially Sachchidananda, is in manifestation Satyam, Prema, Shakti,—Truth, Strength and Love. Whatever is consistent with the truth and principle of things, whatever increases love among men, whatever makes for the strength of the individual, the nation and the race, is divine, it is the law of Vaivaswata Manu, it is the *sanātana dharma* and the Hindu shastra. Only, God is the triple harmony, He is not one-sided. Our love must not make us weak, blind or unwise; our strength must not make us hard and furious; our principles must not make us fanatical or sentimental. Let us think calmly, patiently, impartially; let us love wholly and intensely but wisely; let us act with strength, nobility and force. If even then we make mistakes, yet God makes none. We decide and act; He determines the fruit, and whatever He determines is good.

He is already determining it. Men have long been troubling themselves about social reform and blameless orthodoxy, and orthodoxy has crumbled without social reform being effected. But all the time God has been going about India getting His work done in spite of the talking. Unknown to men the social revolution prepares itself, and it is not in the direction they think.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE AGE OF YOGA

YOGA is meant for the selected few, and these also have to retire to forests or mountain caves in order to practise it, that has so long been the current idea, and to a large extent also the practice. In the West Yoga is regarded as Mysticism, that is, something vague and mysterious, which is of no use in the practical life of mankind. The only Yoga to which Western people easily take is Hatha Yoga, which gives certain definite physical exercises to make the body healthy and perfect. Even in India "Yoga" schools are being established to teach Asanas for health. There is no doubt that in order to practise Yoga one must have a healthy and strong body, and to that extent Hatha Yoga can very well be called a sort of Yoga, but in its true sense Yoga is rather a psychological discipline than body-building; indeed Hatha Yoga in India regarded Rajayoga as its crowning and fulfilment. That discipline seems to be too exacting and difficult, as it was felt by Arjuna when he was being initiated into it by Krishna in the Gita. Arjuna's doubt is the doubt of all mankind, and the Lord has given the proper answer to it for the future of humanity. Religion and morality have so long been the practical guide of humanity, but now the call is to rise to a higher spiritual life which can come only by the practice of Yoga. It is not clearly understood that religion or morality is not spirituality, though both, if properly practised, may prepare one for the spiritual life. Morality is following certain rules of conduct such as the eight-fold path of Buddha, or the ten commandments of the Bible or the code of Confucius. Religion consists in certain beliefs about God and his relations to man, certain rites and ceremonies by which he is to be worshipped. These two generally go together and have helped mankind for thousands of years in building up civilisation and culture. But now there is a deadlock. Though these are being preached and practised, as best as possible, by people all over the world, they could not prevent two world wars with untold sufferings to mankind, and people are still groping how to prevent a third world war, which if it comes may well mean the end of all civilisation and culture. Religion confirms our instinctive belief in

God and in a higher life of peace and beatitude, but it cannot give us the true knowledge, nor can it by itself raise us to that higher life. That is the function of Yoga; it has now to come out of caves and forests and take the lead in human affairs; it is not by "isms" or "patterns" or "shilas" but by Yoga alone that the world can be saved. Yoga is not something vague or unascertainable, it is a science, it follows the same methods of observation, experiment, verification as physical science though its subject matter is different. "What Science does for our knowledge of the material world, replacing first appearances and uses by the hidden truths and as yet occult powers of its great natural forces and in our own minds beliefs and opinions by verified experience and a profound understanding, Yoga does for the higher planes and worlds and possibilities of our being which are aimed at by the religions." (*Synthesis of Yoga*). It is only with the deeper knowledge and power to be obtained by Yoga that the problems of human life can be really solved. This is said to be the atomic age, but more properly it should be called the Age of Yoga. Science has given us great material power, but it is only by Yoga that man will learn how to use that power for a really better and happier life for all mankind. "Therefore", says the Lord in the Gita, "become the Yogin, O Arjuna".

Arjuna, like the modern man, found the demand to be too difficult for him. He understands how to act or not act following certain clear rules or "shilas", he can do worship following certain clearly laid down rites and ceremonies, but the demand of Yoga is to turn inward, make the mind silent, stop the clamours of desire and passions and find the Self or Divine within so that all life and action can be based on a conscious and direct relation with the Divine. As a result of this yogic practice, a new consciousness will develop in us and we shall see the world and ourselves in a new light. The self we shall find within us will be found to be the one self in all and essentially one with the Divine. Living in that consciousness, there can be no conflict, no delusion, no sorrow. As the Upanishad says, "He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings, for he has the perfect knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere oneness?" (Isha). It is only then that the requirement of all religion and morality to love everybody as your own self can be truly realised, and peace and love and bliss can be the law of human life and the basis of human society. Summing up the result of Yoga, the Lord says in the Gita: "The Yogin who has taken up his stand upon oneness and loves Me in all beings, however and in all ways he lives and acts, lives

and acts in Me (that is, he no longer has to follow any religious or moral rule or *shastra*, for whatever he does, rises spontaneously from the spiritual divine nature and is always true, good and beautiful.)" That is the solution for all the ills of human life, and humanity will have to see that there is no other. But to the outward-going practical mind of Arjuna, this Yoga seemed well nigh impossible, and he frankly said to his friend and guide: "This Yoga of the nature of equality which has been described by Thee, O Madhusadana, I see no stable foundation for it owing to restlessness." Though the Guru admitted that Yoga was difficult, he said definitely that it was nothing impossible or impracticable. Yoga is not more difficult than the many difficult things men do in life for gaining earthly ends like money or fame or power which can never bring true happiness or peace. The modern man prefers activism, wants to work restlessly to gain all sorts of things, but very often their work proves fruitless or leads to results quite contrary to what was expected; so there is all-round frustration. Even to do your work, whatever it may be, perfectly, you should do it in Yoga; Yoga, says the Lord in the Gita, is the true skill in works. And this Yoga can be practised by all human beings who have risen above the animal level, that is, who do not allow themselves to be carried away by desires and passions, do not act on the impulse of lust or anger or greed, but uses reason to determine what they should do or not do. And this can be asserted of civilised and cultured men and women in general, that has been the result of human civilisation based on religion and morality. So it can be said that all who want to do Yoga and are willing to practise self-control are fit for doing Yoga: the Lord says, "Without doubt, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless and very difficult to restsain; but, O Kaunteya, it may be controlled by constant practice and non-attachment. By one who is not self-controlled, this Yoga is difficult to attain; but by the self-controlled, it is attainable by properly directed efforts." What are these efforts, the Gita has laid down clearly for all. Self-control is the characteristic of man as distinguished from the animal; in Manu smriti, it has been called *Manava dharma*. So any decent man or woman can hope to succeed in Yoga, provided he or she does it in the proper manner and follows the right technique which of course has to be learnt from a guide or guru. For practising Yoga of the integral kind which the Gita teaches one need not run away from life or work, rather life and work themselves have to be turned into Yoga, and this can be done by basing all life and work on spiritual knowledge. By intelligence we have to distinguish between Purusha or soul on the one hand and Prakriti on the

other which constitutes our body, life and mind. We have to fix it in our thought that I am not this body, not this life force operating in it, not this mind with all its thinking, feeling and willing. All these are the play of Prakriti in us; beyond these, there is the witness soul or Purusha in us, which is our true self and in this self we are one with all our fellow beings and with God. This is the essential knowledge of the Sankhya and Vedanta as propounded by the Gita as the basis of its integral Yoga. Fixing this spiritual knowledge in our mind and heart we should do all works that may be required of us in the world, offering them as a sacrifice to the Divine who is the Enjoyer of all sacrifice, the Lord of all the worlds and the Friend of all creatures. Arjuna feels attracted to this great Yoga, still he hesitates whether it will not be beyond his capacity: "He who takes up Yoga with faith, but cannot control himself with the mind wandering away from Yoga, failing to attain perfection in Yoga, what is his end, O Krishna? Does he not, O mighty-armed, lose both this life (of human activity and thought and emotion which he has left behind) and the Brahmic consciousness to which he aspires and falling from both perish like a dissolving cloud?" The reply which the Lord gave to Arjuna will put courage and confidence in the heart of all who aspire to a spiritual divine life: "O son of Pritha, neither in this life nor hereafter is there destruction for him; never does anyone who practises good, O beloved, come to woe. Having attained to the world of the righteous and having dwelt there for immemorial years, he who fell from Yoga is again born in the house of such as are pure and glorious. Or he may be born in the family of the wise Yogin; indeed such a birth is rare to obtain in this world. There he recovers the mental state of union (with the Divine) which he had formed in his previous life; and with this he again endeavours for perfection, O joy of the Kurus. By that former practice he is irresistibly carried on. Even the seeker after the knowledge of Yoga goes beyond the range of the Vedas and Upanishads. But the Yogin, endeavouring with assiduity, purified from sin, perfecting himself through many lives attains to the highest goal. The Yogin is greater than the doers of askesis, greater than the men of knowledge, greater than the men of works become then the Yogin, O Arjuna."

That is the call of the new age, become the Yogin. By following religion and morality according to the highest scriptures, you can rise to a high status, but that is not the summit of the possibilities of human life on earth which can be realised only by Yoga. One need not have any fears in treading the path of Yoga; even if you cannot go to the end in this life, no effort is

is direction is lost; even a little practice of Yoga brings great gains; "On is path no effort is lost, no obstacle prevails; even a little of this dharma elivers from the great fear." (Gita 2/40). Though it may take many lives attain perfection in Yoga, you need not wait for any distant date for enjoy-g the fruits of Yoga; the moment you decide to enter the path of Yoga id follow it sincerely, a great change comes upon your life, you begin to see t things in a new light, and a new peace and joy possess your being which ou cannot get by anything else. Still it is difficult to keep up enthusiasm an effort which may not bring its full success until after many lives, as is nted in the Gita. As a matter of fact, that remark of the Gita is not meant a discouragement, it only emphasises the fact that the soul is going through long process of evolution towards its goal of Immortality and the Life ivine, and birth and death are only landmarks in this long process. So one eed not be discouraged by any failure or mishap, as all these contribute to ie ultimate success which is assured. Then, this is not our first birth, first fe. The Lord said, "Many are my lives that are past, and thine also, O rjuna." All of us have had a long past and many lives, and it may very well e that we shall attain the crowning realisation in this life and this birth. And is does not depend solely on our own personal effort. Nature which has ven us the human body, life and mind through millions of years of rrestrial evolution is preparing to raise us as a race to a higher spiritual life. When we are rowing against the current and against the wind, our pro-ress may be very difficult and slow; but once the tide comes and the wind is our favour, we have only to set our sails and rest on our oars, we shall be sily and happily carried to our destination. That is the meaning of the new ge and the world crisis that has set in. Even in 1909 Sri Aurobindo wrote the Bengali journal *Dharma*:

"It is noticed for several years in India as if a new race is being created ut of the old race which was overwhelmed with *tamas*. The older children Mother India, having been born at a time of the fading of the Dharma id the uprising of unrighteousness, and having received education in that mosphere, had become short-lived, mean, selfish and narrow-minded. mong them many great men were born and saved the race at this time of eat danger. But instead of doing work according to their genius and power, ey only created the field for the future greatness and vast action of the ce. It is due to their force of righteousness that the rays of the new dawn e illuminating all sides. The new children of Mother India, instead of

inheriting the characteristics of their parents, have become courageous powerful, high-souled, generous, full of high ambition and zeal for servin the good of others and the Motherland. It is for this reason that now-a-day our young men, instead of being obedient to their parents, are followin their own way and there arise disunity and conflict in the practical fiel between the old and the young. The older people want to keep these divinel born pioneers of Satyayuga bound to selfishness and narrowness; they ar only helping *kali* (yuga) without understanding what they are doing. Th youngmen are blazing sparks created by Mahashakti, they are determine to destroy the old for the sake of new creation, they are unable to cheris devotion and obedience to their parents. Only God can remedy this mischie However the will of Mahashakti must prevail, these new offsprings wi not depart without fully accomplishing that for which they have com There is some influence of the old even among the new. On account bad heredity and asuric education many evil souls also have been bor even those who have the command to usher in the new age cannot ful manifest their innate strength and power. A unique sign evident among t new generation which shows the advent of the new age is their turn towar spirituality and Yoga and even half-developed yogic power in many hearts

ANILBARAN

"DO I WAKE OR SLEEP"*

WHEN the word "forlorn" with its aching associations tore Keats back from the soul-entrancing music of the nightingale to which he was stening, to the "weariness, the fever and the fret of the earth"

> "...where men sit and hear each other groan;
> Where palsy shakes a few sad, last grey hairs,
> Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin and dies;
> Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
> And leaden-eyed despairs;
> Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
> Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow...",

e did not quite know whether he was awake or asleep. The music had fled, ıe plaintive anthem of the nightingale had faded "past the near meadows, ver the still stream, up the hill-side"; it had been buried deep "in the next alley-glades". But the spell was still upon him, the lingering enchantment. Was that a vision," Keats wondered, "or a waking dream?" Where had he een transported by the music? Where had he returned now? To what eality or unreality? Was it not that from a joyous wakefulness he had uddenly lapsed into a dull sleep? "Do I wake or sleep?"

Something like this is the usual initial experience of those who come in ontact with the spiritual worlds of Reality. The experience is supremely ne of awakening, of standing in the unwonted light of a new consciousness, f sensing things real, objective, concrete—more concrete than those we ense in the material world. Forgotten is the world of physical forms, for- otten the stress of cares and the goad of desires, and annulled the obsession f material interests. If the physical world is perceived at all, it appears s distant and dim, a procession of fleeting phantoms and shadowy figures— azy, insubstantial, almost unreal. The experience is overwhelming and

* Ref. "Ode to a Nightingale" by Keats.

indubitable. The new world or worlds which open to our vision are people with beings who have their own characteristic consciousness, their ow light of knowledge, their own mode of happy life, their own spontaneou activities. Untroubled by physical limitations, unworn by material care unharassed by conflicting desires, those beings of light live and move in a unassailable harmony of will and thought and feeling. Or it is into a ne consciousness that we rise, and we cease to be what we were before—w become for the moment the new consciousness and its limpid vastness. W enter into an ocean of peace or an abysm of silence, where we become nothi but peace and silence, unimaginable by our unquiet human mind. In tho deep or high regions of existence, we develop a new sight, new powers perception and feeling, and contemplate the worlds from a wideness and in perspective unknown to our sense-bound consciousness. Those are states consciousness or worlds of multiple dimensions to which we can atta only by a heightening or deepening of our own consciousness and a relea from our normal subjection to the physical mind and the physical sens Unlike as in our human mind, there is no doubt ever felt in regard to t knowledge we come by there; the light and peace and bliss that shower up us are felt as realities undeniable. The limitations we labour under in o sense-entangled mind and the obstinate hindrances our physical fra imposes upon us in our striving for self-transcendence, are unknown those limitless levels of being and consciousness. We move there fr freedom to freedom, unrestricted by any of the disabilities that are t painful badge of our ignorance and mortality here. Or, it is a sudden beati vision in which we are caught up, like Suso, the Western mystic, and ha experiences which no tongue can express. In his autobiography Suso de cribes such a sudden vision and his sudden conversion by a hidden ligh

"That which the Servitor saw had no form neither any manner of bei yet he had of it a joy such as he might have known in the seeing of the sha and substances of all joyful things. His heart was hungry, yet satisfied, soul was full of contentment and joy: his prayers and hopes were all fulfille And the Friar could do naught but contemplate this Shining Brightne and he altogether forgot himself and all other things. Was it day or nig He knew not. It was, as it were, a manifestation of the sweetness of Eter Life in the sensations of silence and of rest. Then he said, 'If that whic see and feel be not the Kingdom of Heaven, I know not what it can for it is very sure that the endurance of all possible pains were but a p price to pay for the eternal possession of so great a joy.' " And he continu

This ecstasy lasted for half an hour to an hour, and whether his soul was in he body or out of the body he could not tell. But when he came to his senses t seemed to him that he returned from another world. And so greatly did is body suffer in this short rapture that it seemed to him that none, even in lying, could suffer so greatly in so short a time. The Servitor came to iimself moaning, and he fell down upon the ground like a man who swoons. And he cried inwardly, heaving great sighs from the depth of his soul and aying, 'Oh, my God, where was I and where am I?' And again, 'Oh, my ieart's joy, never shall my soul forget this hour.' He walked, but it was ut his body that walked, as a machine might do. None knew from his demeanour that which was taking place within. But his soul and his spirit vere full of marvels; heavenly lightenings passed and repassed in the deeps f his being, and it seemed to him that he walked on air. And all the powers f his soul were full of these heavenly delights. He was like a vase from which ne has taken a precious ointment, but in which the perfume long remains."[1]

J. A. Symonds, not a bonafide mystic, but an intellectual of no mean alibre, who had occasional access to mystical moods, describes a state vhich is apposite to our point:

"Suddenly...I felt the approach of the mood. Irresistibly it took possession of my mind and will, lasted what seemed an eternity, and disappeared n a series of rapid sensations which resembled the awakening from anaesthetic influence....It consisted of a gradual but swiftly progressive obliteration of space, time, sensation, and the multitudinous factors of experience vhich seem to qualify what we are pleased to call our Self. In proportion s these conditions of ordinary consciousness were subtracted, the sense of n underlying or essential consciousness acquired intensity. At last nothing emained but a pure, absolute, abstract Self. The universe became without orm and void of content. But Self persisted, formidable in its vivid keenness, feeling the most poignant doubt about reality, ready, as it seemed, o find existence break as breaks a bubble round about it....It served to mpress upon my growing nature the phantasmal unreality of all the circumstances which contribute to a merely phenomenal consciousness. Often iave I asked myself with anguish, on waking from that formless state of lenuded, keenly sentient being, Which is the unreality—the trance of iery, vacant, apprehensive, sceptical Self from which I issue, or these urrounding phenomena and habits which veil that inner Self and build a

[1] Mysticism by Underhill

self of flesh-and-blood conventionality? Again, are men the factors of some dream, the dream-like unsubstantiality of which they comprehend at such eventful moments?..."[1]

In both these instances—instances like these could be multiplied indefinitely—there is the same note of wonder and the same subsequent note of doubt whether what is felt and experienced in them is true or what we know and sense here; whether that is a dream or this. "Do we wake or sleep?"

The world we come back to after every such experience appears at first to be not only dream-like and unreal, but exposed in all its glowing disharmony and disorder, its shackling limitations, and ugly distortions. The sharp contrast between what we have seen above and what we see below becomes inexpressibly poignant, even painful. Life seems to be a protracted nightmare, or an insignificant episode, dull and insipid, from which a flight would always be regarded as a happy escape, a blessed release. The vividness of the contrast clinches the sense of the unreality of the material world and invests life with the dark mantle of sleep. Indeed, most spiritual voices are agreed that we are asleep here—asleep in the folds of ignorance. Our vaunted waking is a sleep of infatuation, *moha-nidra*, an evil dream, an oblivion[2] of the essential realities of existence. Our material light is almost a darkness, our sense perceptions an obscure groping, our mental conceptions and convictions flimsy and fanciful constructions which dissolve and vanish at the slightest touch of Reality. We know only the uncertain flux of this blind energy of life, the constant mutation, the interminable processes of things that lead to no definite culmination, but not the Reality, which remains invisible to our mortal eyes. The Many engross our mind, and we know not the One who is self-represented as Many. The Many attract or repel us, they distract and disturb us, they bewitch and delude us. They are like transitory waves which swell and sink on the bosom of the sea. We chase after them, hoping to catch and hold them in our hands for ever, but they elude our grasp—they leap and sparkle and disappear. We deny or ignore the infinite sea from which they rise and into which they sink; and because we ignore the sea, we know not the waves either. The Many are the only realities, concrete, objective, and what not to our sense perceptions. Not indeed that they are totally unreal or illusory

[1] Varieties of Religious Experience by Williams James

[2] "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting."—Wordsworth

but they have only a relative reality, phenomenal and shifting; and our ignorance consists precisely in our mistaking the transient and shifting appearances for the eternal realities of existence. The Upanishads say that those who see here only the Many and not the One, wheel from death to death. It is with death that we pay for our ignorance, and also with sorrow and suffering. Perceiving only the separate, fugitive forms and not the indivisible essence they embody, we desire those of them that attract us, and the force of our desire carries us from death to death in our blind pursuit of the impermanent. The knowledge we so laboriously acquire in life is only a hypothetical knowledge of the appearances and their processes, and not of their essence and imperishable substance. Is it not true, then, that we are asleep in what we know as a state or *the* state of waking?

It is upon this fathomless ignorance of the truth and essence of things that men presumed to base their philosophy of scientific Materialism. And this ignorance they called true knowledge, and all other knowledge was dogmatically dubbed ignorance, superstition, obscurantism. Matter was worshipped, with all the fervour of a religious cult, as the only reality, and all the latent powers and faculties of man, the higher and deeper ranges of his consciousness and their characteristic qualities were not only doubted, but contemptuously denied. The "sleep" deepened in consequence, and its darkness. Materialism triumphed, and trumpeted its triumph to all the corners of the earth. But, fortunately, it was a short-lived triumph. Men stirred again in their sleep—uneasily, with a rankling discontent in their hearts.

The orthodox Vedantins who declare that the world is a dream, an illusion and a hallucination, *swapnonu mayanu matibhramonu*, do not speak in the air, but have their justification in a real experience; only their experience is initial, partial and transitional, not definitive and absolute. When they return from the realisation of the Self or the Brahman, the all-pervading, all-sustaining essential Reality, impersonal, immobile and immutable, they cannot believe that this passing show of phantasmal forms can also be real—in contrast with the immortal infinity of the Self, this world of division and death appears to be so much an illusion, a veritable hallucination! They are, indeed, right, so far as their experience goes, but it does not go very far. There are many experiences, more penetrating and embracing than this initial and liberating one, which can, not only bridge the gulf between That and this, but even reconcile and fuse them together.

The Self or Brahman, realised as the supreme Divine,[1] Purushottama, unites in itself both the static and the dynamic, the Formless and the forms of all the worlds in the universe. In the all-revealing Light of that experience, we see that the world is not only instinct with the immanence of the Eternal—a realisation which even some of the advanced Vedantins may have in moments or long spells of contemplative illumination—but that each being, each object in it is the Eternal Himself, each movement of life is, indeed, a movement of the Force of His Consciousness. This integral realisation unites Spirit and Matter, Time and the Timeless, the One and the Many, the mutable and the Immutable. The darkness, the division, the sufferings of the world are not ignored or overlooked, or branded with the convenient stigma of illusion, but are clearly seen as the concomitant factors of a life which emerges from inconscience and evolves through the night of ignorance towards its own luminous infinity and immortality. All appears as the Supreme Person playing with Himself in the ineffable ecstasy of a multitudinous self-deploying.

If this experience, declared to be the highest and widest by the Upanishads, could be stabilised in the waking consciousness of our whole being, there would then be no need of an absorbed self-withdrawal, no need of an escape from the life of action, no sense of sleep or dream contrasting with the living reality of the inner realisation. We shall perceive, even in the midst of the darkness and distortions of this life of ignorance, the Light, the Harmony and the immaculate Perfection of the Absolute, patiently labouring through aeons to realise and reveal themselves here, in all their fullness, in terms of our material existence. For us, then, the golden Nightingale would sing on for evermore, even through the unceasing hum of the worlds, pouring out His "full heart" "in profuse strains of unpremeditated art." His rapturous music would flow on, waves on gleaming waves, over our whole existence, drowning it in infinite joy and sweetness. In that termless integral waking; in that constant communion of our soul with its eternal Lover; in that blissful perception of the One in the Many and of the Many in the One; in that thrilled experience of universal unity; and, above all, in the sparkling surges of the Nightingale's enrapturing melodies, who will ask himself, like Keats, "Do I wake or sleep?"

RISHABHCHAND

[1] "He in whom are inwoven heaven and earth and the-mid region, and mind with all the the life-currents, Him know to be the one Self; other words put away from you: this is the bridge to immortality."—MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

THE LIFE DIVINE

A Synopsis

(Continued from last issue)

Chapter xxiv

MATTER

THE earthly foundation of the evolution of Life is Matter, which in man has developed into the material body. But the obstinate material grossness of the body has always been a stumbling-block, an unresolved problem, to spiritual development.

The real problem began when Life emerged, attempting to build up living aggregations against and in spite of the material force of atomic disaggregation. Death is the sign of Life's failure to maintain a stable and permanent combination of life and matter in an individual form.

The appearance of Mind has even made the discord more acute, since the upward-turned mind is constantly at war with the insatiable devouring impulse of life and the obstinate inertia of matter. Thus man in his spiritual aim has hitherto tended to break free from the shackles of Mind, Body and Life and seek the pure unsullied Divine Nature. Such escape, however, is not the solution of the problem. We have to see that Life is not really defeated by the resistance of Matter, nor is Mind victorious over the demands of Life and Matter. This unresolved condition of man's present state only represents an incomplete development; a development of certain qualities at the expense of others.

It is clear that this discord of these lower triple elements can only be resolved by the full emergence of Spirit, the fourth principle, in the evolution. We have therefore to consider now how Spirit can be reconciled with Matter.

First we must see that our sensory perception does not give us the complete truth of Matter. Thus science sees Matter in terms of atomic

energy, while philosophy regards it as the substantial form (real or unreal) of some higher Reality, Spirit or Conscious Being beyond. Are then the solid forms we perceive the creations of Mind or Sense? This can only be true, not of the individual mind, but of the overarching universal Mind.

To see this more clearly we have to retrace the source of Creation as it issued from the Divine Nature. From the inseparable Oneness of Being-Consciousness-Force (Sachchidananda) the divided world of Matter, Life and Mind had issued. Supermind, the divine creative Power, is the intermediary Principle through which this cosmic descent and division took place. The agency directing this divison and making the effective separation between the higher and the lower Nature, lies in the Overmind zone, which is the highest periphery of Mind nearest the supramental Truth-Consciousness.

It is clear therefore that the lower stages of the evolution, representing the emergence and interaction of Matter, Life and Mind, have been dominated by the overarching action of the universal Mind (or more properly Overmind), whose fundamental principle of working is to maintain a separation in Life and a division in Matter as the necessary phase in the evolution of the lower Nature.

We see the result of this in the relation between Mind and Matter, where the latter has become a dense and tangible substance accommodated to the senses; that it, Matter has become a separative object of consciousness. Thus objectivity is here the chief working principle by which the true unity has become obscured in separative individual consciousnesses.

We discover that the basis of Matter in the evolution is the infinitesimal concentration of material energy, and with the progress of their evolution these units of matter by the instinct of Life inherent in them have tended to form larger aggreggates, the complex life-forms. These latter in turn urged by an inherent instinctive will and mind have formed themselves into individual beings. Each individual being thus became a self-centred ego-force, motivated by the separative agency of mind.

We see further that the grossness and obscurity of Matter is not really a permanent condition of the terrestrial Nature, but rather it is the firm and rigid basis of its initial stages. There is in fact an evolutionary ascent of Matter, just as there is of Life and Mind; but we have to see that the evolution thus far has been dominated by the overarching principle of cosmic Mind, which at each level has created a working of energy according to its own law.

The radical change, therefore, in the evolution must come when the ascent, through the individual, reaches this highest overarching periphery of mind, and begins to make contact with the fourth principle above mind, which has been termed Supermind and realised to be the Divine creative Power itself.

At present we have to see that the obscurity and denseness of Matter is but the shadow of Mind, which has formed its own relation with Matter and Life, separated from its divine Source. It is when matter is directly motivated by the higher Principle above mind that it will express the divine Being in its fullness of power, consciousness and delight.

Chapter xxv

The Knot of Matter

We see therefore that the sharp division between Spirit and Matter is a practical expediency of mind, and not an absolute relation. We have to see both the true oneness of Spirit and Matter as well as their pragmatic difference. The truth of their oneness rests not only on their divine Source, but also on the fact that in the cosmic Reality there is an indivisible series, or ascending degrees, of substance between Matter at one pole of world-existence and Spirit at the other.

Thus we can speak of pure substance of mind, as well as of life-energy, as planes of existence. Similarly there is a plane where Spirit itself is pure substance. This ladder of descent is the foundation of the created universe, or Cosmos; beyond Cosmos there is no differentiation and we can no longer speak of substance.

We have to see this series descending from Spirit through Mind to Matter, and ascending again from Matter through Mind to Spirit, as a spiritually conceived and created differentiation, where Matter is never separated from Spirit. In man's present world-outlook, however, we have to face the practical reality that Matter in its outer relation is separated from its true spiritual source; and hence when one becomes conscious of Spirit's freedom and immaculate purity, Matter at first appears as a prison and a bar to spiritual progress.

We have to see further that this reaction, and the apparent resistance of matter, stems from man's limited consciousness, which is bound up with the condition of the lower levels of the Evolution. This is what we call the condition of Ignorance where the inherent Consciousness has become lost

or rather absorbed in the world-action. But the truth of the Evolution is the progressive emergence of Consciousness through steps created by a cosmic Descent.

The individual appears to be helpless against this cosmic Ignorance which guides his outer action and seeing. Because the Divine Consciousness is obscured from this labouring world. Matter, rigid, fixed and mechanical, stands in direct opposition to the freedom and boundlessness of Spirit. Matter is the last stage in the descent of Spirit, as well as the first stage in the evolutionary ascent. It thus has to bear the whole weight of Creation, and consequently possesses that rigidity which is the result of intense concentration. As the evolution unfolds so Matter becomes less rigid and open to the planes above it.

First Life and then Mind have sought to impose each their respective laws on the physical form and material force. Nature has yielded, after a struggle, but only up to a certain point, since Life and Mind do not complete the evolutionary progression of the world. Therefore while ever the Principle above Mind has not yet entered into the evolution, the inertia and obstruction of Matter still persist; Life and Mind plainly show that in themselves they cannot conquer the brute Force of the Ignorance.

Enmeshed in the lower stages of the evolution man becomes more conscious of the radical resistance that exists against the entry of a higher principle than Mind into the world. This is because the present condition of the world is dominated by a separated cosmic Mind, and man the mental being is its chief agency. Hence we see the imperative need for man to become the agency, or surrendered instrument, of the Divine Power that is at present separated from mind, for That alone can resolve the obstinate knot of Matter.

The entanglement of the lower Nature becomes clear when we see that Mind manifesting in Matter has had to accept the rigid, limited working of a material substance that mind had itself created. This is the root of the frustration and helplessness with which the mental being is sooner or later faced. As the individual consciousness grows so he becomes more clearly aware of the ignorance of the world, which increases his urge to overcome the limitation and insecurity of Life as he knows it.

But this self-consciousness brings with it the awareness of individual limitation; man is isolated from the world by his own self-centredness. This has cut him off from the higher and wider planes of Consciousness. The resultant unreceptivity and inertness of the body have narrowed the vital impulse into unsatisfied desire, which makes the sense-mind conscious only o

the surface reactions of grief and joy, and the dualities that bring a constant strife and dissatisfaction both within the individual being as well as between individual beings.

Thus instead of the mind being able to rise to a higher Light of Truth, it is absorbed in and held back by this conflict of life and the body. It is this state of mind that has resulted in the pessimistic destiny of the earth life in relation to man's (or rather the soul's) future as otherwhere than on the earth.

It is clear that mind is bound by its own creation, and can only be unbound by the advent of a supramental being, bringing a higher Law into the mental, vital and bodily workings. Such a supramental being would not only liberate mind to become the instrument of the Light, but also life to enjoy the play of a diversified Unity, and the body to express the Infinite and self-delight even in the changing robe of matter. This possibility is open to man, or at least to the earth life in a Divine-turned humanity.

But can the denseness and grossness of earth become such a free principle to admit a higher law other than its present mode of relations? This is not only possible but inevitable in the nature of things, when we realise the reality of the ascending series of Substance, and the descent and emergence of the spiritual Principle in the evolution of the world, bringing with it a higher Law and Divine basis for the earth life and nature.

Chapter xxvi

THE ASCENDING SERIES OF SUBSTANCE

We know the existence of matter in the world most convincingly by the sense of touch (that is, by the innate resistance of matter itself which we experience through the sensitised substance of the body). It is this quality of resistance which gives matter its solidity as well, as its apparent obstinacy and inertia, both of which are its inevitable reactions to a mind-dominating universe.

This formation of matter gives us the clue regarding its role in these lower stages of the evolution. For it is the resistance of matter that has been able to act as a check to the otherwise unrestrained passion of life for interchange, by maintaining its own integrity as the firm, solid, immovable base for Life's evolutionary work. Matter is thus the natural basis of durable form, which has become the hall-mark of the rigid separativeness characteristic of these mind-obscured phases of the evolution.

The ascending series of Substance from Matter to Spirit shows an increasing freedom from those rigid and restricting characters of matter thus far manifest. As we ascend in the scale of Substance the power of interchange, variation and unification becomes progressively open and more possible, until we reach the indivisibility of Spirit. We thus arrive at the opposite pole of resistant Matter in indivisible Spirit; and we see that Matter and Spirit are not separated and opposed but connected and unified, so that the steps exist for Matter's progressive ascent in the evolution.

A knowledge of the nature and relation of these gradations of Substance in respect of men's ascent is therefore of great importance. We see firstly that the present relation between Matter and Mind is not the only possible one, for there is a higher action open to Mind and Life, which will bring a wider and freer action into the material substance of the body (of which the brain cells are but an indication of matter's potentiality).

There are higher worlds or planes connected with man's being, and as the laws of these higher planes are brought into the physical world by man's upward and inner growth so the present imperfection and limitation of substance will be progressively transformed. As we ascend in the scale so we progress from the less dense to the more subtle. The important point for our present inquiry is that this ascending series of substance bases itself on each of the cosmic principles,—Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind, and the triplicity of the Divine Nature—to become successively a characteristic vehicle for the dominant self-expression of each in the evolution.

The earth is founded on the formula of the material substance. Sense works through physical instruments, life through the physical nerve-system and vital organs, and similarly mind has to work through the material substance of the brain, which is the instrument and not the creator of thought. What we experience is the present practical relation between Mind, Life and Matter.

The dominating principle of the next higher grade of substance above the material is the cosmic world of vital Energy, which is characterised by an elemental desire-force. In its own pure expression the vital Energy is Conscious-Life, which must come increasingly with its own powers into the evolutionary ascent and the enlargement of this earthly material life.

Above the world of vital Energy is the world of substance governed by pure Mind, and this plane has a subtlety and flexibility that is unkown to the lower gradations. But as yet the Consciousness there is dimmed, and the utterly free and Light-suffused planes are those above Mind. These

are firstly the world of Supermind, and still higher the worlds of pure Bliss, pure Conscious-Force, and pure Being, which have in the past been visioned as the highest heavens of the earth-departed souls.

All cosmic existence is a ladder of descending and ascending grades of substance, each of which possesses a greater potentiality, plasticity and range in its active expression, and each therefore will bring a higher consciousness into the evolutionary ascent. Thus Matter, which is the beginning and frame of the material world, contains the elements of all the other grades of substance which have descended into it. Evolution, in fact, comes about by the increasing pressure of the supra-material planes on the material, and these in turn help and compel the involved powers and principles to awaken and evolve in the material mould.

Not only is there a restricted emergence of the compressed seed from below, but there is also the descent of the full powers from above at each successive stage, when the emergence has evolved sufficiently to receive and possess them integrally. Thus we see that the evolution of the body to manifest its subtle and causal sheaths as the fit vehicle of the soul or psychic personality, are the natural higher steps in the terrestrial evolution. The six nerve centres of the body (or chakras of the ancient occult science) are hidden links to the subtle body, which when opened out bring the law and control of successively higher powers into the physical frame itself.

By the individual's opening to higher ranges of consciousness the corresponding subtler ranges of substance can become active and manifest constituents of the human body. Thus is the opening on the physical level, as well as the other levels of man's being, a necessary step in the terrestrial evolution of man.

Chapter xxvii

THE SEVENFOLD CHORD OF BEING

All cosmic existence is founded on the seven great terms: Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss (the triune Nature of Divine being), Supermind (the Divine Power and creative Will), and Mind, Life, and Matter (the lower subordinate principles of the higher triplicity).

Supermind, as the central creative linking Power, embraces both the divine Unity above as well as the multiplicity below. Thus proceeding by the double faculty of a comprehensive Knowledge (originating in Unity)

and an apprehensive Knowledge (directed towards multiplicity), Supermind has entered into the multiplicity while at the same time maintaining a real unity and harmony.

There is a fourth principle—the soul—which is the true integrating factor of the lower triplicity of mind, life and matter. But because of the divided nature of these lower levels of existence, the soul has a double appearance: in front is the desire-soul, and behind is the true psychic entity. This pure psychic principle, which is at present obscured in the individual being, is the pure spark of the Divine principle of infinite Bliss.

Thus including the psychic being (the central factor of individuality) there are eight principles which constitute the cosmic ascent and descent, and which together form the two hemispheres, the higher Nature and the lower. The point of separation between the two Natures is the veil that had come between Mind and Supermind. Man's reaching and penetrating this veil is the crux in the evolutionary ascent. The rending of the veil is in fact the fundamental condition for the divine transformation of the earth life. Only thus can the higher, divine Nature enter in its fullness into the earth nature.

The higher Trinity of the Divine Nature is, as we have seen, the source of all manifest existence. Thus the whole cosmic action is produced and regulated by an infinite Force which is the action of an infinite Consciousness. Furthermore, this Consciousness is in its very nature the Divine Bliss or Delight of existence, which is the real cause, essence, and aim of cosmic existence.

The Source of all the cosmic activity (the Dynamis or Becoming) has been visioned in the past as the infinite Stillness (or infinite Being). The bridge between infinite existence and the finite being of our earthly life, is the divine creative Power of Supermind. This is the fourth and central Power in the cosmic Descent, and is also the fourth and key Principle in the evolutionary ascent.

Mind, which is a direct faculty and instrument of Supermind for the lower creation, is thus naturally the first of the lower trilogy to be elevated to a cosmic vision in the individual seeing, and thus replacing the narrow egoistic view. Mind, becoming a conscious instrument of the divine Power, can thus be instrumental in the release into the earth life and material body of a higher, more luminous and freer law of working.

The material universe, since it began as an involution of seven principles locked within one manifest power, must in the nature of things successively

evolve and manifest (around the central nucleus of the psychic being) the higher gradations of Supermind and triune glory of the Divine Nature

Chapter xxviii

SUPERMIND, MIND AND THE OVERMIND MAYA

We have now to consider—at least in a general way in this first Volume —the relation between Knowledge (the Light of Supermind) and the Ignorance (the conflict of this divided Mind-dominated world).

To the mind, immersed in Ignorance, Supermind seems an impossible and unattainable Height, and even opposed to the present condition of man and the world. But we have to see that mind itself has to grow in breadth of vision through man, the mental being. This ascent in consciousness can be seen more clearly when we become aware of the subtle gradations that exist between Mind in the Ignorance and the Light of the Truth-Consciousness.

The individual being, in these lower stages, is clearly a limited consciousness. He is shut off and prevented from entering into that which is above as well as into that which exists below him. But the human mind can extend its lines of contact, as is shown in the great individual achievements. This has been done in the past firstly through intuitive awakening, as through art opening to universal truth; secondly through the penetration into our orbit of consciousness of an overhead consciousness coming as inspiration or revelation carrying the atmosphere of the Divine; and thirdly through a more consciously directed subjected enlargement as in mystical and spiritual experience.

In order to bring about a more permanent opening two movements are necessary: first, a movement inward by which we discover the inner parts of our own being—soul, mind, life and physical being—extending to their universal planes; and second, an ascent upwards, though not a too rapid ascent into the regions of the Spirit, but an awareness of the spiritual mind-range. These are the gradual steps of ascent by which the mind, life and physical being are successively uplifted through the labouring evolution.

In this way we become aware of a Higher Mind, which is characterised by a cosmic vision and a luminous Truth-sight. Intuition is one of the

intermediary zones of this higher Mind through which we discover Overmind, which is in fact the overarching link—the golden Lid—between the supreme Knowledge and the cosmic Ignorance. This is the key to our knowledge of man's ascent.

Overmind is the delegate of Supermind and acts as a screen diffusing the intensity of the supramental Light, which can thus act veiledly in the conditions of the Ignorance. Overmind is aware of and is in contact directly with the Power of Supermind, but is delegated to act through separative powers which are the illmitable aspects of the indivisible Unity. In Overmind the practical division of Soul and Nature (Purusha and Prakriti) is complete. But it is a division that creates a diversity of working while yet based on an inalienable unity.

The Powers of Overmind are the Gods of the ancient mythologies, each is a Power acting in its own domain and yet connected to the Supreme. Because Overmind gives an infinite range of possibilities to the individual action, it marks the beginning of what we see in the present stage of evolution as clash and conflict.

We have to note that whereas man's present individualised view is a sectional outlook, the Overmind Consciousness is global, holding together all opposites and contraries so that each separative power can work out its fullness of consciousness. Overmind viewing the totality of the world-action see both the Impersonal and Personal Divine as equal and co-existent aspects that support and act in the world. It is man's mind that fixes on partial truths, and sees one aspect as the whole or central truth.

The global vision of Overmind sees the dynamic truth of world organisation. All separate existences and principles are acknowledged and seen to originate from one Existence. But while Overmind, as a lower working of Supermind, unites independent realities into wholes, Supermind itself integrates also the detail of their inner organisation.

The Overmind consciousness, compared with our separative mental consciousness, is the catholic, all-embracing Mind that allows of infinite diversity where each entity has its own place and truth of action in the totality. Overmind thus supports this diversity of conflicting individual viewpoints, where each individual is immersed in his own separative seeing, though at the same time possessing the potentiality to grow upwards into wider ranges of consciousness.

Overmind is the dividing line—an opaque veil below—which effectively separates the action of the Ignorance from its supramental Source. Above

vermind is a transparent veil which admits at that level a luminous com-unication with the higher Light.

Of importance for man's present development is the fact that immediately elow the Overmind is a Mind-Energy with a freer play of mentality and a rger power of inter-communication than the human mind as yet possesses. hough there is still a limitation of knowledge here, there is not a denial of ruth. These are the intermediate stages (formed by Mind's descent) which old the immediate possibilities for man's evolutioneary ascnt. The evolu-on is in fact the struggle back to regain the true integrality, in place of the agmentation which made error and falsehood an inevitable stage of deve-pment.

Thus we realise that out of an apparent Inconscience, Non-Existence or nsensiblity from which the evolution began, the dual and contradictory rms of truth and falsehood represent interniediary stages. Here the law f Overmind operates to bring out the full potentiality of each individual, r rather psychic, element in its fullness. It is therefore a purposeful Igno-ance which contains a concealed Consciousness, a masked Divinity.

One important factor in man's evolutionary ascent has been his reaching the lane of Intuition, which is the revealing link between Overmind and man's roping intellect. Intuition can bring nearer to man, and has done in the past hrough flashes of inspiration or revelation, the concealed truth of things. We ave to realise, however, that the seeds of these higher powers of Mind are in act concealed in the very substance of earth and man's nature, and as they rogressively open through the terrestrial evolution, so the higher truths escend and manifest themselves in their full power in the earth substance, fe, and consciousness.

With this luminous knowledge we can with certainty proclaim that a ivine Life is the inevitable outcome and consummation of Nature's evolu-ionary endeavour.

N. Pearson

REVIEW

Sacrifice in the Veda, *By K. R. Potdar.* Publishers: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 7. Pp. 298 Price Rs. 15/-

THE institution of Sacrifice has played an important part in almost all the ancient religions but its role in the way of life developed by the Vedic Aryans and continued by their descendants across the centuries has been something unique. To them Sacrifice is not simply a group festival; it has a significant place in the daily life of the individual too. It permeates the entire life of their society. Sacrifice has been recognised by them as a basic principle of existence establishing and maintaining relation between man and man, man and God. Thus calls an ancient Rishi of the Veda:

> Sacrifice, O Adityas, is your inward monitor; be kind
> For in the bond of kindred we are bound to you.[1]

declaring a truth which is echoed in the famous verse of Gita:

> Foster by this (Sacrifice) the gods and let the gods foster you;
> fostering each other you shall attain to the supreme good.[2]

What is the origin, nature and significance of this Sacrifice? The treatise under review deals comprehensively with the subject of sacrifice—external sacrifice—in the age of the Rig Veda. We say *external* advisedly, for, the rite with which this book deals is only the exoteric aspect of the Sacrifice; there is much more behind it which it is indispensable to know if one is to grasp the real intention and full meaning of this central fact of Vedic worship—the Yajna. But to that we shall turn later.

[1] यज्ञो हीळो वो अन्तर आदित्या अस्ति मृळत।
युष्मे इद्धो अपि ष्मसि स्वस्तये॥ (RV. VIII. 18. 19)

[2] देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यत॥ (III. 11)

Prof. Potdar approaches his subject with all the equipment of a scholar trained in the modern methods of research but with a mind that is not overawed by the 'authority' of the western Orientalists. Discussing the position of the Sacrifice in the Vedic society, its relation to the Hymns and to the Gods, in the first three chapters, he points out that many of these Indologists fail to note the gap between the age of the Rig Veda when ceremonial sacrifice was part—like the hymns—of the religion and the times of the Brahmanas when it became a religion in itself. These scholars draw their inferences about vedic sacrifice largely from and under the inspiration of the Brahmanic literature which is much posterior to the Rig Vedic period and out of consonance with its spirit. The author wisely relies upon the "evidence presented by the hymns themselves for we can say that the hymns themselves can act as an armour to guard the safety of the conclusions they themselves indicate."[1]

So also, he questions the view of some like Bloomfield[2] that Mantras were composed for purposes of ritual. "In the composition of the hymns" he writes, "the dominant idea in the mind of the poet does not appear to be the employment at a particular sacrificial rite but rather the propitiation of the divinity." (p 13). Which of them is of earlier origin, the Mantra or the Sacrifice? The author is inclined to rely upon the utterance of the Rishi 'who though he may have been relatively late in the tradition of the hymns and the sacrifices, was certainly much nearer to them than the later speculators in the field of the interpretation of the Rig Veda.":

> First the Gods brought the hymnal into being; then they engendered
> Agni, their oblation.
> He was their sacrifice...[3]

Which of them was more important? Both the Mantras and the Sacrifice were means to a single end. "Using a metaphor, it can be said that in the days of the Rig Veda, the hymns and the sacrifice were the two horses, drawing the chariot of the propitiation of the divinities. In the days of the Brahmanas, with the shifting of the emphasis, the performance of the sacri-

[1] ब्रह्म वर्म ममान्तरम् (RV. VI. 75. 19)

[2] Viz. "It is sacrifice to the gods, treated poetically. In other words, the poems are incidental to sacrifice."(P. 13)

[3] सूक्तवाकं प्रथममदिदग्निमादिद्धविरजनयन्त देवाः ।
स येषां यज्ञो अभवत् तनूपाः ..... (RV. X. 88. 8)

ficial rite has become a chariot to be drawn by the hymns and the divinities."' (p. 14). Each complements the other. If "the hymns are said to be making the sacrifice divine,[1] it is also stated that the hymns shone at the place of sacrifice only.[2] The hymns in their basic aspect of speech in its divine form are said to be guarded in the place of sacrifice by the (seers)."[3] (p 35)

The Riks leave no room for speculation regarding the relation between the Gods and the Sacrifice. They clearly announce: sacrifice is in the heart of the gods;[4] the Gods have raised the sacrifice to a high level; sacrifice has to have the protection,[5] assistance,[6] the acceptance and confirmation of the Gods.[7] And what is more, sacrifice has been created by the Gods.[8] It is the ladder by which they ascended.[9] Of all the Gods, the position of Agni vis à vis the Sacrifice is the most outstanding. He is the leader, the vicar, the knower of sacrifices.[10] There are many other epithets emphasising his special relation to the sacrifice. There are indeed other Gods like Indra Ashwins etc. who hold important positions and whose presence is indispensable; yet the role of Agni is paramount. The author observes that the number of hymns devoted to the deities determines their position in the Vedic pantheon. We cannot agree. It is pertinent to recall what Sri Aurobindo notes in this connection: "The importance of the Gods has not to be measured by the number of hymns devoted to them or by the extent to which they are invoked in the thoughts of the Rishis, but by the functions which they perform. Agni and Indra to whom the majority of the Vedic hymns are addressed are not greater than Vishnu and Rudra, but the func-

[1] दुष्टरं यस्य साम चिदृधग्यज्ञो न मानुषः (RV. X. 93. 8)

[2] ऋतस्य हि सदसः धीतिः अद्यौत् (RV. X. 111. 2)

[3] पतङ्गो वाचं मनसा विभर्ति तां गन्धर्वोऽवद्गर्भे अन्तः।
तां द्योतमानां स्वर्यं मनीषामृतस्य पदे कवयो निपान्ति ॥ (RV. 177. 2)

[4] यतो हीळो वो अन्तरः (RV. VIII. 18. 19)

[5] ताभिरुतिभिरागतम् (RV. I. 112. 2)

[6] कृणुतं नो अध्वरं . . . (RV.I. 93. 12.)

[7] देवानां शंसमृत आ च, (RV. I. 141. 11)

[8] यज्ञं जनित्वी तन्वी नि मामृजुः (RV.X. 65. 7)

[9] ,देवानामुत्क्रमणम् (Yajurveda. VII. 26.)

[10] अध्वरस्य प्रणेता ; यज्ञनीः, रथिः; प्रत्नः होता; स वेदो यज्ञमानुषक् etc.

tions they fulfil in the internal and external world were the most active, dominant, directly effective for the psychological discipline of the ancient mystics. This alone is the reason of their predominance." Sri Kapali Sastry points out: "The Sun, the glorious symbol of the Truth, the supreme Godhead of the Veda, referred to as That One, *tad ekam*, is addressed in fewer hymns than Indra or Agni or even Maruts. The Rishis invoke the powers of Agni and Indra because they are of constant and immediate consequence in the psychological and spiritual discipline of these mystics, and hence the importance and not because they are superior to the Sun; similarly Maruts, children of Rudra are not greater than their Father though there are more hymns addressed to them than to Rudra in the Rig Veda. The same may be said of Vishnu and Rudra to whom lesser number of hymns are devoted and yet Indra and Agni are not greater than they."[1]

We cannot subscribe either, to the author's explanation when he says that the worship of more than one God in the Sacrifice was due to a desire to promote amity among the devotees of different divinities. Each godhead in the Veda has its special function for which it is brought into manifestation. And the invocation of a particular deity or deities related to the need of the worshipper in his personal life. At times and in certain stages it would be Agni whose help was specially called for and at others the Maruts and Indra or Mitra and Varuna and so on depending upon the nature of the want or wants felt by the seeker. But we anticipate what we have reserved to say later on.

The author proceeds to describe the Scene of the Sacrifice, the importance of the altar, *Vedi*, the number of implements used, the various offerings that were made in the different types of Sacrifice. Attention is drawn to how in spite of all the care and attention given to the ceremonial side of the ritual, the cardinal importance of the heart of the sacrifice i.e. the spirit governing the performance was not lost sight of. Thus he recalls an instance where lack of sincerity on the part of the sacrificer vitiated all the elaborate preparations made and God Indra would not respond.[2] He successfully contests the view of scholars like Macdonald who claim to have discovered traces of magic and sorcery in the rituals of the Rig Vedic Aryans. (p 211-12). The Rishis of the Veda would vehemently scorn any suggestion to that effect, as indeed does Seer Vasishtha:

[1] *Vide* Further Lights: The Veda and the Tantra (Pp. 31)

[2] RV V. 61 2.

So may I die this day if I have harassed any man's life or if I be a fiend,
Yea, may be lose all his ten sons together who with false tongue hath called me Yatudhana.[1]

On the other hand the seers of the Veda attached the highest importance to the Right, the Truth alone and pursued it as the only enduring value. Witness:

Facile to the conscious to distinguish the true and false: their words oppose each other.
Of these two that which is true and honest, Soma protects, and brings the false to nothing.[2]

Speaking of the conception of Sacrifice pervading the whole life in that age, the author points out how even death was elevated into a term of Sacrifice and thus invested with special significance. The Veda records that Yama, the God of Death, was the first to offer his body to Death and that he did so as an offering in his Sacrifice for the weal of gods and men. (p 130)[3]

The role of the different classes of Priests, the part played by the Patrons, the mystical element in the Sacrifice and the influence of the institution of Sacrifice on the social organism are some of the other main subjects dealt with systematically with a wealth of material from Vedic literature. The discussion is throughout learned, nowhere dogmatic.

The author observes in conclusion: "The overall impression of the sacrifice that we thus secure is of an idea which has been very ably conceived and developed for a pretty long stretch of time. Creation has been thought of in terms of the sacrifice; death is being looked upon in the light of the sacrifice; human life appears to be considered as permeated by the idea of the sacrifice. Sacrifice thus appears to have been considered as the very basis of life and it is for this reason that the Rita has come to be identified with the sacrifice." (p 291). He notes in another place: "Sacrifice was considered to be a system of cosmic importance as it concerns the whole

[1] अद्या मुरीय यदि यातुधानो अस्मि यदि वायुस्ततप पूरुषस्य ।
अधा स वीरै र्दशभिर्वि यूया यो मा मोघं यातुधाने त्याह ॥ (RV. VII. 104. 15)
(*Yātudhāna* goblin or sorcerer)

[2] सुविज्ञानं चिकितुषे जनाय सच्चासच्च वचसी पस्पृधाते ।
तयोर्यत्सत्यं यतरदृजीयस्पदित्सोमोऽवति हन्त्यासत् ॥ (RV. VII. 104. 12)

[3] (RV. I. 164. 35)

universe. Its creation is in line with that of the Heaven, Earth and Waters which symbolise the living world." (p. 44).

Truly said. But we would ask can these remarks apply to Sacrifice as it has come to be generally known? If sacrifice means nothing more than a religious or socio-religious ritual and ceremony with a piacular and propitiatory aim—albeit with a dash of exuberant sentiment—performed by a limited number of specially trained priests with the means provided by wealthy patrons, how could it be described as the "centre of the world", *bhūvanasya nābhiḥ*, the universal lodestar of life? How could it be associated with Rita—Truth—that transcends the bourne of Time and Space?

Obviously there is something more than what strikes the eye. The author seems to be aware of this aspect of the matter. Throughout his treatment of the subjuct he feels every now and then that there is in the Veda some significance, some sense which constantly shadows and peeps over the surface meaning. Thus for instance, speaking of the repeated mention of the figure seven in the Veda, he observes: 'In the case of *sapta yavhih*, or *sapta hotra* or *sapta hotrāṇi* and a number of things associated with the number seven, it appears that some mystical significance is attached to the figure seven...' (p 30). Dealing with Hymns, *Nithas*, he says they are 'referred to as secret speeches or words, may be on account of the low tone in which they were to be sung at the sacrifices or on account of some mystical significance that had come to be associated with them' (p. 33). Of offerings he writes: "With certain materials of sacrificial performance too, such mystical significance is associated. Their reference to prayers and the offerings indicates the association with sacrifice and...it is said of Soma that with the eyes of Soma the poet can see the *hiraṇyaya*....Some mystical significance is associated with *ghṛta*, the mysterious source of strength of the *ghṛta*, which it possesses and transmits to the gods indicated by reference to its secret name, its being 'the tongue of the Gods' and 'the centre of immortality' " (p 215).

So too of sacrifice, he is aware of something mystic and observes:
"It can however be seen that a kind of mystical element has come to be associated with the sacrificial performance in its various aspects so as to lead it to the divinity with a sort of mysterious source of strength" (p. 213). He draws attention to the description of the Vedi, the altar which is the seat of sacrifice, as the farthest extremity of the earth, *paro antah pṛthivyāh*,[1] as the nodus of Truth, *ṛtasya nābhiḥ*[2]. He notes that in more place than one

[1] RV. I. 164. 35
[2] RV. X. 13. 3

Sacrifice is referred to as an entity with a consciousness *cetana*; itself conscious it awakens the Gods to conscious activity;[1] and the Gods themselves perform the *conscious* sacrifice, *cetanam yajnam*. And he adds:

"Sacrifice would thus appear to stand as a symbol, a wheel for generating the power that was essential for the sustenance of the human society." (p. 282)

Is it possible to pass by the following Rik without feeling the presence of something mystic and symbolic about it?:

> The car, fresh and pure, is ready at dawn; four yokes it hath, three whips and reins seven.
> Ten-wheeled, benevolent to man, winner of light, urged forward with impulsions and thoughts.[2]

What then is the real significance of the Yajna which is likened by the mystics of the Veda to a thread, *tantu*, to a boat, *nau*, to Manu himself,[3] to a carriage, *ratha*, whose horses are the hymns and the charioteer Agni? What is this Yajna through which, the Yajur Veda declares, the ritual of Yajna prospers?[4]

The Yajna, Sacrifice, in the Veda is of course the ritual that goes by the name. But that is not the whole of the matter. Behind the external ceremony there lies a deeper truth which is the soul that gives life to the rite. The outer ritual is the garb, the symbol of an inner Yajna, a self-consecration by which the Vedic worshipper offers all that he is and has to the higher Powers, the divinities, and lays himself in their benevolent hands which lift him up to their beatitude. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

"The elements of the outer sacrifice in the Veda are used as symbols of the inner sacrifice and self-offering; we give what we are and what we have in order that the riches of the divine Truth and Light may descend into our life and become the elements of our inner birth into the Truth,—a right

[1] तत्रामृतस्य चेतनं यज्ञं ते तनवावहै (RV. I. 170. 4)

[2] प्राता रथो नवो योजि सस्निश्चतुर्युगस्त्रिकशः सप्तरश्मिः।
दशारित्रो मनुष्यः स्वर्षाः स इष्टिभिर्मतिभी रंह्यो भूत् ॥ (RV. II. 18. 1.)

[3] "*Yajno manuh pramatirnah pitā;* the metaphor indicates the importance of the sacrifice even for the origination of the human race. The suggestion of cosmic importance associated with with the sacrifice indicates the importance of the sacrifice for the general understanding of the problem of human life in all its aspects." (p. 252)

[4] यज्ञो यज्ञेन कल्पतम् (Y. V. VS IX. 21.)

thinking, a right understanding, a right action must develop in us which is the thinking, impulsion and action of that higher Truth, *ṛtasya preṣā*, *ṛtasya dhīti*, and by this we must build ourselves in that Truth. Our sacrifice is a journey, a pilgrimage and a battle,—a travel towards the Gods and we also make that journey with Agni, the inner Flame as our path-finder and leader."

"The image of this sacrifice is sometimes that of a journey or voyage; for it travels, it ascends; it has a goal—the vastness, the true existence, the light, the felicity—and it is called upon to discover and keep to the good, the straight and the happy path to the goal, the arduous yet joyful road of the Truth. It has to climb led by the flaming strength of the divine will, from plateau to plateau as of a mountain, it has to cross as in a ship the waters of existence, traverse its rivers, overcome their deep pits and rapid currents; its aim is to arrive at the far-off ocean of light and infinity."

"The Vedic deities are names, powers, personalities of the universal Godhead and they represent each some essential puissance of the Divine Being. They manifest the cosmos and are manifest in it. Children of Light, Sons of the Infinite, they recognise in the soul of man their brother and ally and desire to help and increase him by themselves increasing in him so as to possess his world with their light, strength and beauty. The Gods call man to a divine companionship and alliance; they attract and uplift him to their luminous fraternity, invite his aid and offer theirs against the Sons of Darkness and Division. Man in return calls the Gods to his sacrifice, offers to them his swiftnesses and his strengths, his clarities and his sweetnesses,—milk and butter of the shining Cow, distilled juices of the Plant of Joy, the Horse of the Sacrifice, the cake and the wine, the grain for the God-Mind's radiant coursers. He receives them into his being and their gifts into his life, increases them by the hymns and the wine, and forms perfectly,—as a smith forges iron, says the Veda—their great and luminous godheads."

Studied with this background and in the light of this esoteric interpretation revived by Sri Aurobindo, we find that everything connected with the Sacrifice has a symbolic meaning. The implements used, the offerings made, the gifts showered and even the gods that are invoked signify and stand for certain deeper verities in the life of the seeker of the life beatific.

M. P. PANDIT

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